

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

has done for ages, in your subjects, in the body of Holy Church, and throughout the whole of Christendom. And, therefore, you have the greatest need of being founded in perfect charity, with the pearl of justice. O sweetest rather, the world can no more endure ; the vices so abound, and especially in those who are placed in the garden of Holy Church as sweet-smelling flowers to give the odour of virtue, that we see them so full of wickedness that they are polluting all the world. Alas! where is purity of heart and perfect chastity, whereby they should make the incontinent become continent by their virtue ? Instead of this, the continent and the pure oftentimes taste impurity through their un-cleanness. Alas I where is the largesse of charity and the care of souls, and the distributing to the poor, for the welfare of the Church and for their necessity ? You know well that they do the contrary. Wretched that I am ! With grief I tell you that the sons of the Church nourish themselves with the substance that they receive through the blood of Christ, and they are not ashamed to barter and gamble it with those most sacred hands that have been anointed by you, the vicar of Christ—not to speak of the other miseries which they commit. Alas ! where is the profound humility with which they should confound their own sensual pride—the pride with which, with great avarice, they commit simony, buying benefices with presents or with flatter) or with money, decked out in vain and dissolute fashion, not like ecclesiastics, but worse than laymen ? Alas, sweetest mine, remedy this for us ; comfort the agonized desires of the servants of God, who are dying with grief and cannot die. They are waiting with great desire for you, like a true pastor, to set hand to the correction, not only in word but in deed, letting this pearl of justice glow forth from you united with mercy, and without any servile fear, to correct in truth those who are fed at the breast of this holy Spouse, those who are made ministers of the blood."

But, for this reformation of the Church, let him begin with the Sacred College itself, choosing a band of holy and fearless men for cardinals, who will aid him in his arduous task and correct them